DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 349 712 EA 024 339

AUTHOR Krepel, Thomas L.; Grady, Marilyn L.

TITLE An Analysis of Local School Board Member Responses to the National Goals for Education: Results and Implications of a Multistate Survey.

PUB DATE Aug 92

NOTE 77p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (Terre Haute, IN, August 1992).

PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Board of Education Role; *Boards of Education; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; *Governance; Governing Boards; Government School Relationship; Local Government; *Policy Formation; *School District Autonomy

IDENTIFIERS Louisiana; Minnesota; National Education Goals 1990; Nebraska

ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that examined the responses of local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska to the National Goals for Education (NGE) are presented in this paper. A survey mailed to 718 local school board members in July 1991 obtained 298 responses, a 42 percent response rate. The respondents assigned a higher priority to goals that are related to broad areas of district responsibility and are part of the traditional local school district function. A substantial majority (85 percent) disagreed that the NGE are necessary for school improvement, and slightly over half disagreed that they meet local needs. Overall, board members expressed caution and ambivalence, believing that educational goals are best determined by local school boards in response to local needs. Because the establishment of national education goals implies a move toward a centralized policy structure, the following issues must be considered in implementing them: providing a more inclusive implementation process and adequate resource allocation and challenging existing research models. Twenty-one tables are included. (Contains 23 references. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED349712

AN ANALYSIS OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RESPONSES TO THE NATIONAL GOALS FOR EDUCATION: RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF A MULTISTATE SURVEY

Thomas L. Krepel, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Center for
Educational Administration & Leadership
St. Cloud State University

Marilyn L. Grady, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Educational Administration
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

A Paper Presented To The
Annual Meeting Of The
National Council of Professors of Educational Administration

Terre Haute, Indiana
August 11, 1992

EA 024 339

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Krepel

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

AN ANALYSIS OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RESPONSES TO THE NATIONAL GOALS FOR EDUCATION: RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF A MULTISTATE SURVEY

Thomas L. Krepel, Ph.D.
St. Cloud State University

Marilyn L. Grady, Ph.D.
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Introduction

The legal responsibility for the control and direction of public elementary and secondary education in the United States has been vested in state governments. Indeed, because education is not a function specifically delegated to the federal government, involvement of the national government in public elementary and secondary education has been through incidental provisions of the U.S. Constitution (Berube, 1991; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1991).

Traditionally, state governments have delegated responsibility for the general supervision and administration of public education to local boards of education. Although state governments can and do delimit the prerogatives of local school boards through expressed powers assigned by statutory and administrative law, significant discretion and decision making authority remain in the hands of local boards of education (Knezevich, 1984; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1991; Russo, 1992). Among the important functions performed by local boards of education are identification of the school district's goals and purposes, and acquisition and allocation of the resources

necessary with which to fulfill district priorities (Danzenberger & Usdan, 1992; Knezevich, 1984).

Recent national events have the potential to significantly alter the traditional federal-state-local relationship and responsibility for pubic elementary and secondary education in the United States. In the Spring of 1990, the nation's governors presented six National Goals for Education (National Governors' Association, 1990a). The National Goals for Education (NGE) were developed in response to an agreement formulated at an education summit meeting of the governors, which was initiated and conducted by President George Bush in the Fall of 1989. The NGE were subsequently endorsed by the Bush Administration (Alexander, 1991) and efforts have been undertaken to develop strategies for the implementation of the Goals.

The National Goals for Education and related implementation strategies have the potential to dramatically affect the goal setting and resource allocation prerogatives of local school boards. Although the nation's governors (National Governors' Association, 1990b) and the Bush Administration (Alexander, 1991) have emphasized the importance of state and local responsibility for progress toward the NGE, the implications of the Goals for local school board policy, program, and resource decision making has generated controversy and concern (American Association of School Administrators, 1991a, 1991b, 1992; Lewis, 1991). Among

the concerns that have been expressed in relation to the NGE are questions regarding consensus on the process and content of the Goals, the financial impact of the NGE, displacement of local education authority and goals by the NGE, and movement toward a nationalized system of elementary and secondary education (Krepel, Grady, & McGrew, 1991). Despite the traditional and central role of local school boards in the design and delivery of public elementary and secondary education in the U.S., little is known about the response of local school board members to the National Goals for Education.

In 1991, a multistate effort was undertaken to determine the response of local school boards to the National Goals for Education. Local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska were surveyed to ascertain perceptions of the consistency of the NGE to local school district needs, sources of local school board member information regarding the NGE, action taken by local school boards in response to the NGE, and assessment of impediments to and likelihood of accomplishment of the NGE.

Method

Data for the study were obtained in the summer of 1991 by way of a survey of current members of governing boards of public elementary and secondary school districts in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska. The selected states provided a geographically diverse group with which to examine responses to

the National Goals for Education. Research subjects were identified through local school board membership records of the Louisiana School Boards Association, the Minnesota School Boards Association, and the Nebraska Association of School Boards. A random sample (n=718) was drawn in proportion to each state's portion of the total research population (LA - n=196/27%; MN - n=274/38%; NE - n=248/35%). Survey instruments were distributed via U.S. mail in July of 1991. A total of 298 (42%) usable responses were received.

The survey instrument was designed to obtain information from local school board members concerning their reaction and efforts related to the National Goals for Education. Data elicited by the researchers included state, gender, age, school board experience, ethnicity, attained education, and school district size of the respondent. The nine dependent variables of the study were divided into three categories to facilitate reporting of results and included: 1) Priority (priority assigned to each of the NGE); 2) Information and response (primary source of information, local board response to the NGE); and 3) Perceptions (party most responsible for setting goals, party most responsible for accomplishing goals; impediments to Goal accomplishment, necessity of Goals for education improvement, degree to which NGE meet local needs, likelihood of accomplishment of the NGE).

Frequency distributions and chi-square procedures were used to describe respondent characteristics and to examine differences among study subjects. Frequency distributions, means, chi square procedures, and one way analyses of variance were used to describe responses to dependent measures and to examine differences in response among study subjects. An alpha of .05 was used to determine significance.

Results

Subject characteristics - Characteristics of study subjects are presented in Tables 1-6 (see Appendix A). Of the two hundred ninety-seven respondents, two hundred eight (70%) were male and eighty-nine (30%) were female. State by state distribution of local school member gender is displayed in Table 1. A chi square analysis indicated no significant difference (X^2=1.12, df=2, n.s.) among the states on the basis of gender of local school board members.

Two hundred ninety-five subjects provided responses to the item on age. State by state distribution of responses to local school board member age is displayed in Table 2. Over seventy-one percent (n=211) of the respondents indicated being within the age range of 36-45 years. Chi square analysis of local school board member age indicated no significant difference (X^2=13.18, df=8, n.s.) among the respondents in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska.

Table 3 displays a state by state distribution of responses to the item related to local school board experience. More than half (56%, n=167) of the two hundred ninety-seven subjects responding to the survey item related to school board experience indicated five years or less school board service. A significant difference (X^2=66.93, df=6, p<.05) was found among the respondents in the three states on the basis of school board experience. Louisiana had significantly more respondents with less board experience than Minnesota and Nebraska. Because of statutory term limits on school board membership in Louisiana, this difference was expected.

Of the two hundred ninety-seven subjects who provided an indication of ethnicity, ninety-two percent (n=274) responded as Caucasian. Table 4 provides a state by state distribution of the ethnicity of local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska. Given the skewed distribution of responses on this item, data were recoded as 'white' and 'nonwhite' for subsequent chi square analysis. A significant difference (X^2=10.50, df=2, p<.05) was found among the three states on the basis of ethnicity of school board members. However, due to the population demographics of the subject states this difference was expected, with Louisiana having more nonwhite local school board members than Minnesota and Nebraska.

Subjects were asked to indicate level of attained education. Responses to the attained education item are displayed on a state by state basis in Table 5. Over fifty-seven percent (n=171) of the two hundred ninety-seven respondents indicated having attained a collegiate baccalaureate degree or higher. The difference in the level of attained education among local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska was found to be not significant (X^2=5.45, df=8, n.s.).

Three-fourths of the study subjects serve on boards of local public school districts that have K-12 enrollments of 2500 or less. Of the 296 board members who indicated school district size, 221 (75%) serve on boards of districts with K-12 enrollments of 2500 or less. However, a significant difference (X^2=99.96, df=8, p<.05) was found to exist among the three states on the basis of local school board member district size. More Louisiana respondents serve on boards of larger school districts than do respondents in Minnesota and Nebraska. Since Louisiana has organized local school districts on the basis of parishes, the state has a relatively small number of districts and, thus, larger per district enrollments. As a result, the difference among the states on the basis of size of district was expected.

Priority assigned to the National Goals for Education - Study subjects were asked to indicate the priority they assign to each of the six National Goals for Education. Tables 7-13 provide a

state by state display of the priority assigned to the National Goals for Education by local school board members (see Appendix B). Two hundred ninety-four subjects assigned a priority ranking to NGE 1, which relates to readiness to learn. Sixty percent of the respondents (n=175) gave NGE 1 a high or highest priority. A display of the state by state priority rankings assigned by local school board members to NGE 1 is provided in Table 7. Study subjects assigned the lowest mean priority ($\bar{X}$=3.74) among the six National Goals for Education to NGE 1. A one way analysis of variance was used to examine differences in the priority ranking of NGE 1 by state. Results of the procedure indicated that state had a significant effect ($F[2,285]=5.16$, $p<.05$) on the priority assigned by local school board members to NGE 1.

The second National Goal for Education relates to increasing the high school completion rate. Two hundred ninety-three respondents assigned a priority to NGE 2, with more than 75% (n=223) assigning a high or highest priority to the Goal. Priority rankings assigned by local school board members to NGE 2, by state, are displayed in Table 8. NGE 2 was given the fourth highest mean priority ranking ($\bar{X}$=4.01) among the six National Goals for Education by local school board members in the three states. An analysis of the effect of state on the priority ranking assigned to NGE 2 was conducted by way of a one way ANOVA. State was found to have a significant effect

($F[2,285]=4.15$, $p<.05$) on the priority ranking assigned to the second National Goal for Education by local school board members.

Table 9 displays the state by state priority rankings assigned by local school board members to National Goal for Education 3, which relates to student achievement and citizenship. NGE 3 received from the local school board members in the three states the third highest mean priority ranking ($\bar{X}=4.26$) among the six National Goals for Education. State was found, by way of a one way ANOVA, to have no effect ($F[2,289]=1.19$, n.s.) on the priority ranking assigned by local school board members in the three states to the third National Goal for Education.

The fourth National Goal for Education relates to science and mathematics achievement. As shown in Table 10, 294 local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska provided a priority ranking for NGE 4. The Goal received the fifth highest mean priority ranking ($\bar{X}=3.81$) among the six National Goals for Education from local school board members in the three states. The results of a one way analysis of variance indicated that state had a significant effect ($F[2,285]=8.42$, $p<.05$) on the priority assigned by local school board members to National Goal for Education 4.

Table 11 displays the state by state priority rankings assigned by local school board members to the National Goal for Education

that relates to adult literacy and lifelong learning, NGE 5. As shown in the table, NGE 5 received from the respondents the second highest mean priority ($\bar{X}$=4.27) among the six National Goals for Education. A one way ANOVA showed no differences among the three states (F[2,285]=1.12, n.s.).

The last National Goal for Education, NGE 6, relates to safe, disciplined, drug free schools. Two hundred ninety-two local school members in the three states assigned a priority to NGE 6. Distribution of the responses of local school board members to the priority assigned is provided in Table 12. The Goal was given the highest mean priority ($\bar{X}$=4.56) among the six National Goals for Education by the local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska. A one way analysis of variance showed that state had a significant effect (F[2,285]=7.14, $p<.05$) on the priority assigned by local school board members to NGE 6.

The state by state priority assigned by local school board members to the six National Goals for Education are summarized for comparison in Table 13 to the data from adult citizen polling conducted by Phi Delta Kappa (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1991). Noticeable differences exist between the priority assigned by local school board members and priority assigned by adult citizens throughout the U.S. to the National Goals for Education. The difference in the priority assignments is most evident in

relation to National Goals for Education 1 (readiness to learn), 2 (high school completion), and 6 (safe, disciplined, drug free schools). School board members in the three states of the study gave a lower priority to National Goals for Education 1 and 2 than did adult citizens. On the other hand, local school board members gave a higher priority to National Goal for Education 6 than did citizens.

Information source and response related to the National Goals for Education - The study attempted to ascertain the primary source of information local school board members have for the National Goals for Education, and to determine the response taken to date by local school boards in the three states to the National Goals for Education. Data collected during the study in relation to those two questions are displayed in Tables 14 and 15 (see Appendix C).

Two hundred ninety-six respondents identified their primary source of information relative to the National Goals for Education. A display of state by state responses to the item related to primary source of information is presented in Table 14. The most frequently given response (n=100, 34%) identifying primary source of information on the National Goals for Education for local school board members was professional organizations. Despite their central role in formulating the National Goals for Education, governors were the least identified (n=2, <1%) primary source of information on the Goals by local school board members.

A chi square analysis indicated that there was no significant difference (X^2=13.51, df=8, n.s.) in the primary source of information on the National Goals for Education among local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska.

Respondents were asked to identify the action taken by their school board in response to the National Goals for Education. As shown in Table 15, two hundred ninety-five responses were received on this item. The most frequently given indication (n=128, 43%) of action taken in response to the NGE was that the Goals had been studied or discussed by the board, but that the board had not formally endorsed or adopted the National Goals for Education. No significant difference (X^2=4.85, df=8, n.s) was found in the response to the National Goals for Education among local school board members from the three states.

Perceptions related to the National Goals for Education - Local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska were asked to share their perceptions associated with several questions related to the National Goals for Education. Perceptions provided by the study subjects are displayed in Tables 16-21 located in Appendix D.

Local school board members were asked to indicate whom they believe is most responsible for setting national goals for education. As indicated by the data display in Table 16, 295

local school board members indicated whom they believe is most responsible for setting goals for education. Although responses to this item were widely dispersed, the party most frequently identified (n=81, 27%) as being responsible for setting goals for education was local boards of education. In view of the initiation, formulation, and implementation roles played by the U.S. President and the nation's governors relative to the National Goals for Education, it is noteworthy that those two parties were least frequently identified (n=11, 4%; n=4, 1%, respectively) by local school board members as being most responsible for setting national goals for education. A chi square analysis of responses to this item revealed no significant difference (X^2=5.17, df=4, n.s.) among local school board members in the three states relative to who is most responsible for setting national goals for education.

Table 17 provides a state by state display of local school board member perceptions regarding who is most responsible for accomplishing the National Goals for Education. As can be seen in the table, 295 local school board members responded to this item. State legislatures were most frequently identified (n=96, 32%) as the party most responsible for accomplishing the National Goals for Education. Again, despite the active role of the U.S. President and the fifty state governors in the National Goals for Education, those parties were the two least frequently identified (n=10, 3%; n=8, 3%, respectively) by local school board members

in the three states as being most responsible for accomplishing the National Goals for Education. Respondents' perceptions relative to the party most responsible for accomplishing the National Goals for Education were found to manifest no significant difference (X^2=.76, df=4, n.s.) among local school board members in the three states.

Perceptions of local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska relative to impediments to accomplishment of the National Goals for Education were solicited. Data in Table 18 indicate that two hundred ninety-three local school board members in the three states indicated their perception of impediments to accomplishment of the National Goals for Education. Costs were identified most frequently (n=102, 35%) as the impediment to accomplishment of the National Goals for Education. The costs impediment may actually be higher since forty-two responses in the 'other' category were accompanied by volunteered comments that were cost related. As a result, the identification of costs as the impediment to accomplishment of the National Goals for Education could be as high as 49% (n=144) of all responses given to this item. A chi square analysis of responses to the impediments item revealed a significant difference (X^2=46.14, df=8, p<.05) among local school board members in the three states. Local school board members from Nebraska responded more frequently than their counterparts in Louisiana and Minnesota that there are no impediments to

accomplishment of the National Goals for Education. Further, the Nebraska school board members were less prone to indicate that costs were an impediment to accomplishment of the NGE than their colleagues in Louisiana and Minnesota.

Local school board members in the three states were asked to indicate whether they felt the National Goals for Education are necessary for the improvement of public elementary and secondary education in the United States. Table 19 displays local school board member responses to this item. Approximately 85 percent (n=254) of the local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the National Goals for Education are necessary for the improvement of American education. The effect of state on local school board member perceptions of the necessity of National Goals for Education for the improvement of American education was tested by a one way analysis of variance and found to be not significant ($F[2,289]=8.49$, n.s.).

Table 20 provides a state by state display of local school board member responses to the statement that the National Goals for Education meet local school district needs. Over half (n=151, 51%) of the 296 responses to this item disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the National Goals for Education meet local school district needs. A one way ANOVA indicated no significant ($F[2,289]=.98$, n.s.) effect by state on

the responses of local school board members in the three states to the statement that the National Goals for Education meet local school district needs.

The last perception measured in the survey of local school board members relative to the National Goals for Education dealt with respondent ratings of the likelihood of accomplishment of the NGE. Table 21 displays on a state by state basis the two hundred ninety-four responses received on this item. On a ten point scale, in which 1 represented highest likelihood of accomplishment and 10 represented lowest likelihood of accomplishment, the most frequently given response was 5 (n=70, 24%) and the mean response was 5.93. Local school board member ratings of the likelihood of accomplishment of the National Goals for Education suggests ambivalence, with a tendency toward pessimism. There were no differences among the local school board members in the three states in their perceptions of the likelihood of accomplishment of the National Goals for Education ($F[2,289]=1.05$, n.s.).

Discussion

The recent development of National Goals for Education by the U.S. President and the nation's governors has the potential to dramatically alter the traditional, legal, and formal relationship that has existed between federal, state, and local governments for public elementary and secondary education. The impact of the National Goals for Education may be most pronounced

on traditional powers and responsibilities of those governmental units most directly involved in the design and delivery of educational services, local school boards.

Because of concerns and criticisms that have emerged relative to the process used to develop, as well as the content of, the National Goals for Education, it is important to understand the perspective of those government units most affected by the Goals. This study was undertaken to better understand the perspective of local school boards on the National Goals for Education. Using members of local public school boards in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska, the study sought to determine the priority assigned to the National Goals for Education by local school board members, the information sources and response of local school board members to the NGE, and local school board member perceptions related to the National Goals. The researchers collected data on respondents in order to characterize the research subjects and to further analyze responses to dependent measures of the project.

Characteristics of local school board members - The study subjects in three states represent a homogeneous group with few differences found among the three geographically diverse states. Local school board members in the three states can be characterized as middle-aged, well-educated, white males. These characteristics are of particular relevance to questions of

public policy, such as the National Goals for Education. Data collected during the study suggest that local school boards in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska are not representative of broader national and state populations. Differences between the perceptions of public policy leaders, such as the subjects in this study, and those of the general citizenry raise a number of questions about representative functions of government and school boards in particular, communication and information exchange between policy makers and citizens, and the knowledge base necessary for governing. Further examination of these differences is warranted and can contribute to better understanding of education policy making at the local level.

The study results also suggest that the local school board members in the three subject states tend to have relatively small amounts of board experience and/or relatively short tenure in the board member role. In some cases, Louisiana in particular, these characteristics can be accounted for by legal mechanisms, such as statutory limits on term of office. However, interesting questions remain. For example, what happens to local school board members? Are their terms of office kept relatively brief because of movement to higher elective office, because of a sense of fulfillment of purpose and objective as a school board member, or by frustration and resignation in the board member role? The implications of these questions for the representativeness of school board membership, continuity and consistency of public

education policy, and leadership suggest a need to further explore the topic.

Priority assigned by local school board members to the National Goals for Education - Results from this study suggest that local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska place higher priority on those National Goals for Education that are related to broad areas of district responsibility (e.g., school environment) and that are part of the traditional local school district function (e.g., student achievement and citizenship, or adult literacy). Those National Goals for Education that were not assigned a high priority by the local school board members in the three states that are of a broad character or are under the traditional purview of local school districts (e.g., high school completion) may be explained by the nature of the states from which study subjects were drawn. That is, two of the three subject states, Minnesota and Nebraska, have historically and current high rates of high school completion.

Given the substantial evidence of the importance of and the current high level of federal and state interest in supporting school readiness programs (Committee for Economic Development, 1989, 1991), it is surprising to see the National Goal for Education related to readiness to learn (i.e., NGE 1) assigned lowest priority by local school board members in the three states. This priority ranking may be explained by the

uncertainty created among local school board members as a result of the costly and complex implications of school districts becoming active and accountable for a relatively new function, readiness of preschool aged children for learning.

Information source and response of local school board members to the National Goals for Education - Local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska indicated that professional organizations, school district administrators, and the news media, respectively, are their primary sources of information regarding the National Goals for Education. This finding is particularly curious given the concerns that the processes of initiation, formulation, and implementation of the National for Education have been exclusive (AASA, 1991a, 1991b). Several questions result from these findings including what information is being provided by the primary source, who is the primary information source relying upon for NGE-related information, and what is the quality of the content of and analysis reflected in the information used and conveyed by the primary information sources to local school board members.

Study findings raise additional questions about the role of the initiators of the National Goals for Education, the U.S. President and the nation's governors, in informing local school board members about the Goals. Local school board members in the three subject states identified the governors least frequently as

their primary source of information about the NGE. After having set in motion a major education policy initiative, the National Goals for Education, the nation's governors appear not to have provided follow through in the form of information to policy makers at the local level. Further investigation should be devoted to this phenomenon to ascertain why this has occurred and to assess the degree of commitment of the governors to the accomplishment of the National Goals for Education.

Local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska indicated a noticeable degree of caution in terms of their responses to the National Goals for Education. Although the most frequently given response was that the boards on which the respondents served had taken some action on the NGE, the action did not extend to formal adoption or endorsement of the Goals or that the Goals are affecting policy and resource decision making at the local level. Responses to this item seem to indicate that local school board members are aware of the NGE but prefer to keep education goal setting functions at the local level. The seeming uncertainty, caution, or skepticism of local school board members reflected in this finding may be due in part to the sources of information about the NGE identified by local school boards. Appropriate caution must be used in interpreting this particular finding because several months have elapsed from the time of the survey and current local board action in response to the NGE may have shifted significantly. A valuable function

could be fulfilled by professional organizations, such as the National School Boards Association or the American Association of School Administrators, in periodically assessing the response of local school boards to the National Goals for Education. Such information would be useful in gaining a fuller understanding of the ultimate viability of the NGE.

Perceptions of local school board members regarding the National Goals for Education - Results from this study indicate that local school board members in the three subject states see education goal setting and accomplishment as a local prerogative. Respondents indicated most frequently that they see local school boards as being most responsible for setting, and state legislatures as most responsible for accomplishing, education goals. Conversely, subjects in this study identified least frequently the initiators of the National Goals for Education, the U.S. President and the fifty state governors, as being most responsible for setting or accomplishing goals for education. These findings are consistent with and do not deviate from the traditional relationship that has existed between the federal, state, and local governments for public education in the United States. These results suggest a need for a more active and sustained discussion and analysis of the National Goals for Education for altering intergovernmental relations.

If local school boards are to be expected to endorse and implement the National Goals for Education, findings from this study indicate that local school board members' perceptions of costs as an impediment to Goals accomplishment will need to addressed. Given the current resource constraints being experienced by all levels of government throughout the United States, this finding is not surprising. However, the governors (NGA, 1990a) and the Bush Administration (Alexander, 1991) have recognized that the National Goals for Education are ambitious. Additional concerns have been expressed about possible dramatic increases in expenditures that are implied by the National Goals for Education (AASA, 1990, 1992; Phi Delta Kappa, 1990) as well as the significant effect the Goals may have on the traditional relationship among government levels for education (Cuban, 1990; Timar, 1989). Given the current and foreseeable resource constraints faced by all units of government, including local school boards, and the broad implications of the National Goals for Education, it is important that attention be devoted to resolving local school member perceptions that costs will be the biggest impediment to Goals accomplishment.

A substantial majority (almost 85%) of local school board members participating in the study indicated disagreement that the National Goals for Education are necessary for the improvement of American schools. Further, a majority (51%) of study subjects disagreed with the notion that the National Goals for Education

meet local education needs. These finding do not suggest that local school board members do not support the concept of goals for education. Rather, the findings indicate that local school board members believe education goals are best determined at lower levels of government, particularly by local school boards, and in response to local needs. The findings are consistent with other responses obtained in the study regarding responsibility for education goal setting and goal accomplishment.

Last, results from the study indicate that local school board members in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska are ambivalent, at best, about the likelihood that the National Goals for Education will be accomplished. This finding may help explain other results in the study. That is, local school board members do not appear willing to relinquish their traditional education goal setting prerogatives unless there is broader understanding and acceptance of the need for, sustainability of commitment to, and responsibility for accomplishment of the National Goals for Education.

Conclusion

The National Goals for Education have broad implications for public elementary and secondary education in the United States. The NGE have the potential to radically alter the formal and traditional relationships that have existed among the federal, state, and local governments relative to public schooling. The very notion of national goals suggests a move toward a more

centralized policy structure for American education. Further, assessment structures used to measure progress toward the National Goals for Education could create a de facto nationalized education system. These changes would be as momentous as any that have occurred in the recent history of American education.

Regardless of their broad policy implications, the National Goals for Education represent a new found activism and involvement of the executive branches of the federal and state governments in shaping public elementary and secondary education. Whether this activism and involvement will be sustained, what it bodes for the future of public education, and how other branches of government, especially the federal and state legislatures and local school boards, will respond are important questions that need to be addressed.

As the nation moves toward implementation of the National Goals for Education, several issues will need to be considered. First, the implementation processes associated with the NGE will need to be more inclusive than those used in the initiation and formulation of the Goals. Regardless of whether the National Goals for Education respond to local needs, implementation efforts will force more attention to the issue of displacement of local and state discretion for determining the direction, content, and process of public elementary and secondary education. And, of course, implementation of the National Goals

for Education will present major challenges in acquiring and allocating resources for a public education system that, along with other public functions, is struggling to respond to existing needs with inadequate resources.

Finally, the National Goals for Education will present significant challenges to the academic community. The NGE appear to represent a new and not altogether understood approach to education policy making in the United States. The questions raised by this study will, along with issues associated with implementation of the National Goals for Education, require careful scrutiny and reconsideration of existing theoretical models of public policy making for education. In short, all levels of public policy making and all levels of the education enterprise in the United States will be profoundly affected by the National Goals for Education.

REFERENCES

Alexander, L. (1991). The America 2000 Education Strategy. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

American Association of School Administrators. (1990). Some points to make when you talk about the summit. Arlington, VA: Author.

American Association of School Administrators. (1991a). City superintendents see little in Bush plan. Leadership News, 83, 1.

American Association of School Administrators. (1991b). Congress begins debate on Bush's 'America 2000'. Leadership News, 84, 1.

American Association of School Administrators. (1992). School leaders question America 2000 trends. Leadership News, 96, 2.

Berube, M.R. (1991). American presidents and education. New York, NY: Greenwood Press.

Committee for Economic Development. (1989). Children In Need: Investment Strategies For The Educationally Disadvantaged. Washington, DC: Author.

Committee for Economic Development. (1991). The Unfinished Agenda: A New Vision For Child Development And Education. Washington, DC: Author.

Cuban, L. (1990). Four stories about national education goals. Phi Delta Kappan, 72, 265-271.

Danzenberger, J.P., & Usdan, M.D. (1992). Strengthening a grass roots American institution: The local school board. In P.F. First & H.J. Walberg (Eds.), School boards: Changing local control (pp.91-124). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Elam, S.E., Rose, L.C., & Gallup, A.M. (1991). The 23rd annual Gallup poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 73, 41-56.

Feistritzer, C.E. (1992). A profile of school board presidents. In P.F. First & H.J. Walberg (Eds.), School boards: Changing local control (pp. 125-47). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

First, P.F., & Walberg, H.J. (Eds.). (1992). School boards: Changing local control. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Knezevich, S.J. (1984). Administration of Public Education. (4th ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Krepel, T., Grady, M., & McGrew, K. (1991, August). The national goals for education: Challenges in policy, measurement, and research. Symposium conducted at the 45th Annual Conference of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, Fargo, ND.

Lunenburg, F.C. & Ornstein, A.C. (1991). Educational Administration: Concepts and Practices. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Lewis, A. (1991). America 2000: What kind of nation? Phi Delta Kappan, 72, 10, 734-5.

National Governors' Association. (1990a). Educating America: State Strategies For Achieving The National Education Goals. Washington, D.C.: Author.

National Governors' Association. (1990b). A process for measuring and reporting on progress toward the national education goals. NGA Policy, July 29, 1990. Washington, D.C.: Author.

Phi Delta Kappa. (1990). Achieving the nation's education goals. Bloomington, IN: Author.

Russo, C.J. (1992). The legal status of school boards in the intergovernmental system. In P.F. First & H.J. Walberg (Eds.), School boards: Changing local control (pp. 3-18). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Timar, T. (1989). The politics of school restructuring. Phi Delta Kappan, 71, 265-275.

Twentieth Century Fund/Danforth Foundation. (1992). Facing the challenge: The report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on School Governance. New York, NY: Twentieth Century Fund Press.

Appendix A

Tables 1 - 6

Subject Characteristics

Table 1

National Education Goals Project

Subject Characterisitcs

Gender

STATE		Male	Female	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	45	20	65
	%	(.69)	(.31)	(1.00)
MN	n	87	42	129
	%	(.67)	(.33)	(1.00)
NE	n	76	27	103
	%	(.74)	(.26)	(.100)
Total (column)	n	208	89	297
	%	(.70)	(.30)	(1.00)

Table 2

National Education Goals Project

Subject Characteristics

Age (years)

STATE		26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	>65	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	8	21	17	14	5	65
	%	(.12)	(.32)	(.26)	(.22)	(.08)	(1.00)
MN	n	8	68	35	13	5	129
	%	(.06)	(.52)	(.27)	(.06)	(.04)	(1.00)
NE	n	12	48	22	12	7	101
	%	(.12)	(.47)	(.22)	(.12)	(.07)	(1.00)
Total (column)	n	28	137	74	39	17	295
	%	(.09)	(.46)	(.25)	(.13)	(.06)	(1.00)

Table 3

National Education Goals Project

Subject Characteristics

Board Experience (years)

STATE		<1	1-5	6-10	>10	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	32	11	9	13	65
	%	(.49)	(.17)	(.14)	(.20)	(1.00)
MN	n	3	62	36	28	129
	%	(.02)	(.48)	(.28)	(.22)	(1.00)
NE	n	21	38	28	16	103
	%	(.20)	(.37)	(.27)	(.16)	(1.00)
Total (column)	n	56	111	73	57	297
	%	(.19)	(.37)	(.25)	(.19)	(1.00)

Table 4

National Education Goals Project

Subject Characteristics

Ethnicity

STATE		African-American	Caucasian	Native American	Other	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	9	54	2	0	65
	%	(.14)	(.83)	(.03)	(.00)	(1.00)
MN	n	0	124	4	1	129
	%	(.00)	(.96)	(.03)	(.01)	(1.00)
NE	n	0	96	7	0	103
	%	(.00)	(.93)	(.07)	(.00)	(1.00)
Total (column)	n	9	274	13	1	297
	%	(.03)	(.92)	(.04)	(<.01)	(1.00)

Table 5

National Education Goals Project

Subject Characteristics

Attained Education

STATE		thru high school diploma	some college, <BA/BS	thru BA/BS	some graduate education, <grad degree	graduate or professional degree	other	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	11	13	14	4	22	1	65
	%	(.17)	(.20)	(.20)	(.06)	(.34)	(.01)	(1.00)
MN	n	28	27	34	10	28	2	129
	%	(.22)	(.21)	(.26)	(.08)	(.22)	(.02)	(1.00)
NE	n	18	26	29	5	25	0	103
	%	(.18)	(.25)	(.28)	(.05)	(.24)	(.00)	(1.00)
Total (column)	n	57	66	77	19	75	3	297
	%	(.20)	(.22)	(.26)	(.06)	(.25)	(.01)	(1.00)

Table 6

National Education Goals Project

Subject Characteristics

School District Size (by K-12 enrollment)

STATE		<300	301-750	751-2500	2501-5000	5001-10000	10001-25000	>25000	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	2	11	16	6	11	9	10	65
	%	(.03)	(.17)	(.25)	(.09)	(.17)	(.14)	(.15)	(1.00)
MN	n	14	40	51	16	6	2	0	129
	%	(.11)	(.31)	(.40)	(.12)	(.05)	(.02)	(.00)	(1.00)
NE	n	42	33	12	7	5	2	1	102
	%	(.41)	(.32)	(.12)	(.07)	(.05)	(.02)	(.01)	(1.00)
Total (column)	n	58	84	79	29	22	13	11	296
	%	(.20)	(.28)	(.27)	(.10)	(.07)	(.04)	(.04)	(1.00)

Appendix B

Tables 7 - 13

Priority Assigned By

Local School Board Members

To The

National Goals For Education

Table 7

National Education Goals Project

Priority Assigned to National Goal for Education #1
Readiness for School

Priority Assigned

STATE		1 (lowest)	2	3	4	5 (highest)	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	0	3	15	25	20	63
	%	(.00)	(.05)	(.24)	(.40)	(.31)	(1.00)
mean=3.98							
MN	n	0	7	43	48	30	128
	%	(.00)	(.05)	(.34)	(.38)	(.24)	(1.00)
mean=3.79							
NE	n	3	6	42	38	14	103
	%	(.03)	(.06)	(.41)	(.37)	(.14)	(1.00)
mean=3.52							
Total	n	3	16	100	111	64	294
(column)	%	(.01)	(.05)	(.34)	(.38)	(.22)	(1.00)
mean=3.74							

Table 8

National Education Goals Project

Priority Assigned to National Goal for Education #2
High School Completion

Priority Assigned

STATE		1 (lowest)	2	3	4	5 (highest)	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	1	3	7	20	32	63
	%	(.01)	(.05)	(.11)	(.32)	(.51)	(1.00)
mean=4.25							
MN	n	2	4	33	57	32	128
	%	(.02)	(.03)	(.26)	(.45)	(.25)	(1.00)
mean=3.88							
NE	n	1	5	14	52	30	102
	%	(.01)	(.05)	(.14)	(.51)	(.29)	(1.00)
mean=4.03							
Total	n	4	12	54	129	94	293
(column)	%	(.01)	(.04)	(.18)	(.44)	(.32)	(1.00)
mean=4.01							

Table 9

National Education Goals Project

Priority Assigned to National Goal for Education #3
Student Achievement and Citizenship

Priority Assigned

LA	n	1	2	6	19	35	63
	%	(.01)	(.03)	(.09)	(.30)	(.56)	(1.00)
mean=4.35							
MN	n	1	6	17	47	58	129
	%	(<.01)	(.05)	(.13)	(.36)	(.45)	(1.00)
mean=4.20							
NE	n	3	2	4	48	46	103
	%	(.03)	(.02)	(.04)	(.47)	(.45)	(1.00)
mean=4.28							
Total	n	5	10	27	114	139	295
(column)	%	(.02)	(.03)	(.09)	(.39)	(.47)	(1.00)
mean=4.26							

Table 10

National Education Goals Project

Priority Assigned to National Goal for Education #4
Science and Mathematics

Priority Assigned

STATE		1 (lowest)	2	3	4	5 (highest)	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	1	3	7	24	28	63
	%	(.01)	(.05)	(.11)	(.38)	(.44)	(1.00)
mean=4.19							
MN	n	3	6	48	51	21	129
	%	(.02)	(.05)	(.37)	(.40)	(.16)	(1.00)
mean=3.63							
NE	n	1	2	27	57	15	102
	%	(.01)	(.02)	(.26)	(.56)	(.15)	(1.00)
mean=3.81							
Total (column)	n	5	11	82	132	63	294
	%	(.02)	(.04)	(.28)	(.45)	(.21)	(1.00)
mean=3.81							

Table 11

National Education Goals Project

Priority Assigned to National Goal for Education #5
Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

Priority Assigned

STATE		1 (lowest)	2	3	4	5 (highest)	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	1	2	5	28	27	63
	%	(.01)	(.03)	(.08)	(.44)	(.43)	(1.00)
mean=4.24							
MN	n	1	2	20	52	54	129
	%	(<.01)	(.01)	(.16)	(.40)	(.42)	(1.00)
mean=4.21							
NE	n	0	2	9	40	52	103
	%	(.00)	(.02)	(.09)	(.39)	(.50)	(1.00)
mean=4.38							
Total	n	2	6	34	120	133	295
(column)	%	(<.01)	(.02)	(.11)	(.41)	(.45)	(1.00)
mean=4.27							

Table 12

National Education Goals Project

Priority Assigned to National Goal for Education #6
Safe, Disciplined, Drug-Free Schools

Priority Assigned

STATE		1 (lowest)	2	3	4	5 (highest)	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	0	0	2	8	52	62
	%	(.00)	(.00)	(.03)	(.13)	(.84)	(1.00)
mean=4.81							
MN	n	0	0	6	56	65	127
	%	(.00)	(.00)	(.05)	(.44)	(.51)	(1.00)
mean=4.46							
NE	n	1	0	4	37	61	103
	%	(.01)	(.00)	(.04)	(.36)	(.59)	(1.00)
mean=4.52							
Total	n	1	0	12	101	178	292
(column)	%	(<.01)	(.00)	(.04)	(.35)	(.61)	(1.00)
mean=4.56							

Table 13

National Education Goals Project

Comparison of Priority Assigned to the National Goals for Education by Louisiana, Minnesota, and Nebraska School Board Members and Respondents to the Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education

	Priority Assigned			
Goal	LA	MN	NE	Gallup*
NGE #1- Readiness for school	6	5	6	2 (tie)
NGE#2- High school completion	3	4	4	1
NGE#3- Student achievement & citizenship	2	3	3	2 (tie)
NGE#4- Science & mathematics	5	6	5	6
NGE#5- Adult literacy & lifelong learning	4	2	2	4 (tie)
NGE#6- Safe, disciplined, drug-free schools	1	1	1	4 (tie)

*Source: Elam, S.E., Rose, L.C., & Gallup, A.M. (1991). The 23rd annual Gallup poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 73, 1, 41-56.

Appendix C

Tables 14 - 15

Information Source And

Response To The

National Goals For Education

Table 14

National Education Goals Project

Primary Source of Information on the National Goals for Education

Primary Information Source

STATE		Governor	State Dept. of Education	District Admin.	Professional Organizations	News Media	No Information	Other	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	1	8	11	21	11	10	3	65
	%	(.01)	(.12)	(.17)	(.32)	(.17)	(.15)	(.05)	(1.00)
MN	n	1	12	23	45	28	7	12	128
	%	(<.01)	(.09)	(.18)	(.35)	(.22)	(.05)	(.09)	(1.00)
NE	n	0	7	29	34	21	4	8	103
	%	(.00)	(.07)	(.28)	(.33)	(.20)	(.04)	(.08)	(1.00)
Total (column)	n	2	27	63	100	60	21	23	296
	%	(<.01)	(.09)	(.21)	(.34)	(.20)	(.07)	(.08)	(1.00)

Table 15

National Education Goals Project

School Board Response to the National Goals for Education

Response

STATE		No Action	Some Action (1)	Adopted	Other (2)	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	27	24	10	3	64
	%	(.42)	(.38)	(.16)	(.05)	(1.00)
MN	n	42	58	21	8	129
	%	(.33)	(.45)	(.16)	(.06)	(1.00)
NE	n	35	46	19	2	102
	%	(.34)	(.45)	(.19)	(.02)	(1.00)
Total	n	104	128	50	13	295
(column)	%	(.35)	(.43)	(.17)	(.04)	(1.00)

(1) Includes any response in which the NGE were studied or discussed, but not endorsed or adopted.

(2) Volunteered responses include partial adoption to meet local needs, prefer previously established district goals.

Appendix D

Tables 16 - 21

Perceptions Related To The

National Goals For Education

Table 16

National Education Goals Project

Party Most Responsible for Setting National Goals for Education

Party Most Responsible

STATE		U.S. President	U.S. Dept. of Education	Governor	State Legislature	State Dept. of Education	Local Board of Education	Local School Administration	Other	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	5	16	3	0	15	15	5	6	65
	%	(.08)	(.25)	(.05)	(.00)	(.23)	(.23)	(.08)	(.09)	(1.00)
MN	n	4	28	0	6	25	36	6	23	128
	%	(.03)	(.22)	(.00)	(.05)	(.20)	(.28)	(.05)	(.18)	(1.00)
NE	n	2	29	1	4	24	30	4	8	102
	%	(.02)	(.28)	(.01)	(.04)	(.24)	(.29)	(.04)	(.08)	(1.00)
Total (column)	n	11	73	4	10	64	81	15	37	295
	%	(.04)	(.25)	(.01)	(.03)	(.22)	(.27)	(.05)	(.12)	(1.00)

Federal
84
(.28)

Initiators
15
(.05)

State
78
(.26)

Local
96
(.33)

Table 17

National Education Goals Project

Party Most Responsible for Accomplishment of the National Goals for Education

Party Most Responsible

STATE		U.S. President	U.S. Dept. of Education	Governor	State Legislature	State Dept. of Education	Local Board of Education	Local School Administration	Other	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	7	3	3	13	7	11	9	12	65
	%	(.11)	(.05)	(.05)	(.20)	(.11)	(.17)	(.14)	(.18)	(1.00)
MN	n	2	16	2	42	15	17	18	16	128
	%	(.01)	(.13)	(.01)	(.33)	(.12)	(.13)	(.14)	(.13)	(1.00)
NE	n	1	8	3	41	10	16	8	15	102
	%	(.01)	(.08)	(.03)	(.40)	(.10)	(.16)	(.08)	(.15)	(1.00)
Total (column)	n	10	27	8	96	32	44	35	43	295
	%	(.03)	(.09)	(.03)	(.32)	(.11)	(.15)	(.12)	(.15)	(1.00)

Federal
37
(.12)

Initiators
18
(.06)

State
136
(.46)

Local
79
(.27)

Table 18

National Education Goals Project

Impediments to Accomplishments of the National Goals for Education

		Impediments							
STATE		Vague	Not Relevant	Costs	Lack of Agreement	Unrealistic	No Impediments	Other	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	4	1	25	6	5	3	20	64
	%	(.06)	(.01)	(.39)	(.09)	(.08)	(.05)	(.31)	(1.00)
MN	n	12	5	54	10	12	10	25	128
	%	(.09)	(.04)	(.42)	(.08)	(.09)	(.08)	(.20)	(1.00)
NE	n	2	11	23	15	7	34	9	101
	%	(.02)	(.11)	(.23)	(.15)	(.07)	(.33)	(.09)	(1.00)
Total (column)	n	18	17	102*	31	24	47	54*	293
	%	(.06)	(.06)	(.35)	(.11)	(.08)	(.16)	(.18)	(1.00)

*42 "Other" respondents volunteered "Costs"-related comments; "Costs" may actually be as high as n=144 or 49% of all responses.

Table 19

National Education Goals Project

National Goals for Education Necessary for the Improvement of American Education

Necessity of National Goals for Education

STATE		1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	38	21	4	1	1	65
	%	(.58)	(.32)	(.06)	(.02)	(.02)	(1.00)
mean=1.55							
MN	n	32	71	17	5	3	128
	%	(.25)	(.55)	(.13)	(.04)	(.02)	(1.00)
mean=2.03							
NE	n	35	57	9	2	0	103
	%	(.34)	(.55)	(.09)	(.02)	(.00)	(1.00)
mean=1.79							
Total (column)	n	105	149	30	8	4	296
	%	(.35)	(.50)	(.10)	(.03)	(.01)	(1.00)
mean=1.84							

Table 20

National Education Goals Project

National Goals for Education Meet Local Needs

NGE Meet Local Needs

STATE		1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	4	32	20	7	2	65
	%	(.06)	(.49)	(.31)	(.11)	(.03)	(1.00)
mean=2.55							
MN	n	2	58	48	19	1	128
	%	(.02)	(.45)	(.38)	(.15)	(<.01)	(1.00)
mean=2.68							
NE	n	4	51	38	9	1	103
	%	(.04)	(.50)	(.37)	(.09)	(.01)	(1.00)
mean=2.53							
Total (column)	n	10	141	106	35	4	296
	%	(.03)	(.48)	(.36)	(.12)	(.01)	(1.00)
mean=2.60							

Table 21

National Education Goals Project

Likelihood of Accomplishment of the National Goals for Education

		Likelihood of Accomplishment										
STATE		10 (lowest)	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1 (highest)	TOTAL (row)
LA	n	6	1	7	6	9	19	8	7	1	0	64
	%	(.09)	(.02)	(.11)	(.09)	(.14)	(.30)	(.13)	(.11)	(.02)	(.00)	(1.00)
mean=5.80												
MN	n	11	6	15	25	12	30	16	10	2	0	127
	%	(.09)	(.05)	(.12)	(.20)	(.09)	(.24)	(.13)	(.08)	(.02)	(.00)	(1.00)
mean=6.13												
NE	n	6	4	13	17	8	21	20	13	1	0	103
	%	(.06)	(.04)	(.13)	(.17)	(.08)	(.20)	(.19)	(.13)	(.01)	(.00)	(1.00)
mean=5.76												
Total (column)	n	23	11	35	48	29	70	44	30	4	0	294
	%	(.08)	(.04)	(.12)	(.16)	(.10)	(.24)	(.15)	(.10)	(.01)	(.00)	(1.00)
mean=5.93												